

**Conference at the
Centre for Research on Housing and Habitat (CIVHA)**

01- 03 October 2014, Faculty of Architecture and Design, Merida, Venezuela.

Paper title:

Challenges in the use of craft as a source of inspiration for industrial design in Venezuela

Author:

Rafael Ignacio Lacruz-Rengel

Universidad de Los Andes, Venezuela.

Available from:

http://webdelprofesor.ula.ve/arquitectura/rlacruz/ponencias_recientes_archivos/civha_abstract.pdf

Abstract:

The use of crafts as a source of inspiration has become a way to create products different and peculiar from those of other regions of the globe in underdeveloped countries aiming to industrialization (Sánchez, 2006). For these countries, the inspiration on their crafts is a logical response to the commercial disadvantages derived from competing with products from countries whose industry is highly developed, and therefore, capable of penetrating any market under the hallmark of globalization. Within this reality, the Venezuelan case is particularly idiosyncratic due to aspect such as: (1) the decline experienced by its manufacturing sector in the last 15 years -which came to represent 17,4% of Venezuela's Gross Domestic Product in 1998 and now is less than 10% (Pérez-Vigil, 2013), with a clear trend to further industrial decline thanks to the policies put into practice by the present government (Guerra, 2013); (2) the lack of strong historical referents in Venezuela's crafts, which places the country in a weak position in relation to other countries of the region who are creating products inspired by their local crafts (Lacruz-Rengel, 2013); and (3) the careless way in which the government as well as the Venezuelan laws have historically envisage what the crafts stand for in the country. Factors such as these are taken by the author to explain why the use of craft as a source of inspiration or as a means to impel the development of industrial design in Venezuela has not prospered, resulting in misleading approaches to the role of industrial design and the crafts in such processes (Pérez-Urbaneja, 2011), thanks to the use of criteria detached from the country's reality (Lacruz-Rengel, 2012). Therefore any initiative to develop industrial design in Venezuela standing on its craft, should take as its starting point the analysis of such weaknesses to be able to overcome them in a conscious way.

Key words: industrial design, craft, challenges, inspiration, Venezuelan manufactures.